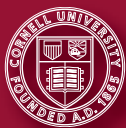




Southeast Asia Program

AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

FALL BULLETIN 2008



Cornell University



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Message from the Director

It is a pleasure for me to once again stand in as interim director of the Southeast Asia program, especially now that we have a clear leadership succession plan in place. As you probably have heard, Thak and I will be standing in for a year each, preparing the ground for our next long term Director, Tamara Loos, who will take over for a three year term in Fall 2010.

Most pleasures are, unfortunately, accompanied by some pain. The pain in this instance, is induced by the university's decision to move the Einaudi Center out of the College of Arts and Sciences to report to the vice provost for international relations. While this is probably a good decision, since it enables the Einaudi Center to be a pan-Cornell entity (private and public) rather than being under the control of the College of Arts and Sciences, the move promises to be an administrative nightmare. The key challenge here is for SEAP to "de-couple" from the College of Arts and Sciences with our financial situation intact (the college had imposed several financial commitments on us that will cause us considerable strain if not resolved). With able help from Nancy and Wendy, and Nic van de Walle (the Director of the Einaudi Center), we hope to be able to deal with this challenge.

We have had a good year. In addition to our normal activities, a few things of note: Greg Green, Curator of the Echols Collection on Southeast Asia, traveled to Southeast Asia in the spring to augment our collections; SEAP publications began marketing its monographs through Cornell University Press to access wider markets; we introduced an electronic version of the SEAP Bulletin which is published online in the winter and spring; and the Kahin Book Prize was announced at the Association of Asian Studies Conference in Atlanta. This prize, at the behest of George McT. Kahin's friends, family and students and SEAP, aims to encourage and recognize continuing original contributions to the field in the form of second books and beyond.

The year ahead promises to be eventful. We have our annual fall reception in September, followed by the eleventh annual graduate student symposium in October, and a SEAP Film festival. We also need to plan for an external program review (a requirement of our National Resource Center status) and for the Golay lecture which takes place in 2009. SEAP Outreach will be organizing a display on Burma/Myanmar and the Karen for the Tompkins County Public Library in September, along with presentations on this topic for teachers in Syracuse and Ithaca public schools.

We are pleased to welcome a new faculty member, Thomas Pepinsky (PhD Yale '07, Political Science), who has joined the government department. Tom comes to us from the University of Colorado-Boulder and is the Co-principal Investigator of a Smith Richardson Foundation Grant through 2009 entitled, "Islamic Radicalism: A Threat to Indonesian Democracy?" We expect Tom's appointment will help us attract more graduate students with an interest in politics in Southeast Asia.

And as always, the program looks to you (SEAP students, alumni, and affiliates) for advice and support. Please take a few moments to fill in the attached survey (this is critical to our Title VI NRC application) and we welcome your letters and input as always. Feedback on the new e-bulletin would be particularly welcome.

Best wishes,

Sarosh Kuruvilla



Please join RB's friends for a memorial concert to be held next year on Sunday, September 27, 2009 at 4pm at the Grace Episcopal Church in Elmira. For more information visit www.grace-elmira.org.

In Memoriam...

ROBERT B. JONES (1920-2007)

John U. Wolff, Professor emeritus of linguistics and Asian studies with
 John Whitman, Professor of linguistics and Asian studies
 Richard Leed, Professor emeritus of linguistics

ROBERT B. JONES, Professor Emeritus of Linguistics and Asian Studies, passed away November 23, 2007 in the Lakeside Nursing Home, Ithaca. RB, as he was known to all, was born January 31, 1920, in Dallas, Texas. He began undergraduate study in music, studying organ under Dora Poteet Barclay at Southern Methodist University. RB became an accomplished organist, and played organ regularly until shortly before his death. His studies were interrupted in 1941, when war broke out. RB joined the U.S. Army, where he was chosen for language training in Japanese. It was this training that stimulated his interest in linguistics.

Following Army service, RB resumed his studies at the University of California, Berkeley, where he graduated in 1947. He continued on for post-graduate studies at Berkeley and completed his Ph.D. in linguistics in 1958 under the renowned specialist in Thai and Amerindian linguistics, Mary Haas. His Ph.D. dissertation was a descriptive and historical study of the major languages in the Karen language family (Sgaw, Pho, and Pa'o), spoken in Burma and Thailand. RB revised and expanded the dissertation after a year of fieldwork in Burma funded by the Ford Foundation in 1957-8. The resulting study was published

in the University of California linguistic series as *Karen Linguistic Studies*. This monograph is among the most thoroughgoing studies of any Tibeto-Burman language and is still the most authoritative single-volume study of the Karen family. In addition to extensive texts, and an in-depth analysis of the phonology, morphology, and syntax of Sgaw, it contains phonological sketches of Pho, Pa'o, and Palaychi and a reconstruction and glossary of Proto-Karen based on a comparison of the phonology of those four dialects.

After leaving Berkeley, RB taught briefly at Georgetown University and in the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department. In 1955, he joined the faculty of the then Division of Modern Languages of Cornell University and was given charge of all the language programs dealing with mainland Southeast Asia as well as Japanese. At the same time he took part in the development of the Field of Linguistics and the Southeast Asian Studies program. He taught courses and mentored students in both of these areas. RB taught Vietnamese, Thai, Burmese, as well as Japanese and linguistics courses. This unusually heavy teaching load was reduced somewhat after the first couple of years, when a Japanese teacher was hired, and then



LEFT TO RIGHT:

Circa 1970 R.B. Jones, standing, leads a discussion with students, left to right, Craig Reynolds, Lorraine Gesick, Thak Chaloemtiarana, Dolina Milar and others

R.B. at home in 2007


R.B. shortly after his retirement in 1986

again in 1970, when the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics was authorized to hire a professor of Vietnamese studies. RB remained in charge of Burmese and Thai and continued teaching linguistics and area studies courses until his retirement in 1986. He served as Graduate Field Representative in Linguistics for several years prior to his retirement.

Developing Asian language programs during RB's early days at Cornell meant creating pedagogical materials, for little was available for use in the classroom for Asian languages. RB created and published materials for learning beginning Vietnamese and advanced Thai and for the Burmese and Japanese writing systems. His primary academic interest was historical linguistics, and his teaching covered all of the major language groups in mainland Southeast Asia. He published a seminal article on the historical phonology of the Tai languages, and as noted above, *Karen Linguistic Studies*, the published version of his Ph.D. dissertation, is a keystone of modern Tibeto-Burman historical linguistics. RB was highly respected by colleagues in his areas of expertise, and he was invited to serve as a consultant to the National Science Foundation, the Defense Language Institute, the Ford Foundation, the Library of Congress, the Encyclopedia Britannica, the Department of Health Education and Welfare, and the Center for Applied Linguistics. An extensive collection of RB's unpublished papers on Southeast Asian linguistics and other topics are catalogued in the Cornell University Library Rare Manuscript Collection. A partial bibliography of RB's writings on Tibeto-Burman follows at the end of this memorial. An important manuscript on Old Burmese was incomplete at the time of RB's death.

RB's social life revolved around music and the church. Upon arriving in Ithaca in 1955, RB joined the choir of St John's Episcopal Church, where he met the choir director and organist

A. Richard Strauss, who became his life-long companion. Several years thereafter, RB and Richard bought a house together on Glenside Road, where Richard established an organ-building business and built a succession of organs for RB, as well as a harpsichord. RB played both instruments regularly. There they entertained their wide circle of friends with music and RB's gourmet cooking. RB was also an avid gardener and established an exquisite garden, ringed with rhododendrons, in the woodsy setting of Glenside. Inside the house, RB had established a solarium filled with orchids and other gorgeous blooming plants, where his several cats (he once had as many as five) loved to nap.

RB's faithful companion, A. Richard Strauss, cared for him in the last months of his life. He is also survived by several nieces and nephews as well as cousins. 

R.B. Jones's publications on Tibeto-Burman

- Jones, Robert B., Jr. 1961. *Karen Linguistic Studies: Description, comparison, and texts* (UC Cal pub in ling 25). Berkeley and Los Angeles: UC Press.
- Jones, Robert B. 1972. Sketch of Burmese dialects. *Studies in linguistics in honor of George L. Trager* (*Janua Linguarum*, Ser. Maior, 52), ed. by M. Estellie Smith, 413-22. The Hague, Mouton.
- Jones, Robert B. 1974. Rev. of Okell, *A reference grammar of colloquial Burmese*. *Language* 50. 1: 205-7.
- Jones, Robert B. 1975. Rev. of Roop, An introduction to the Burmese writing system. *Journal of Asian Studies* 32. 1: 205-6.
- Jones, Robert B. 1975. The question of Karen linguistic affiliation. 8th International Sino-Tibetan Language and Linguistics.
- Jones, Robert B. 1976. Prolegomena to a phonology of Old Burmese. *Southeast Asian history and historiography: essays presented to D. G. E. Hall*, ed. by C. D. Cowan, and O. W. Walters, 43-50. Ithaca, NY, Cornell U. Press.
- Jones, Robert B. 1986. Pitch Register Languages. *Contributions to Sino-Tibetan Studies* ed. by John McCoy & Timothy Light, 135-143. Leiden: Brill.
- Jones, Robert B. 1988. Proto-Burmese as a test of reconstruction. *Rhetorica, Phonological syntactica*, ed. by Duncan-Rose and Vennemann, 203-211.

Tuning to...

GAMELAN AT CORNELL



Martin F. Hatch, Associate Professor of music and Asian studies



The Cornell Gamelan Ensemble performing at their spring concert in May 2008



Left: Bethany Collier performs a Balinese dance at the spring 2008 concert

Above: A shadow puppet performance by Sumarsam accompanied by the Cornell Gamelan Ensemble at the Johnson Museum in 1981

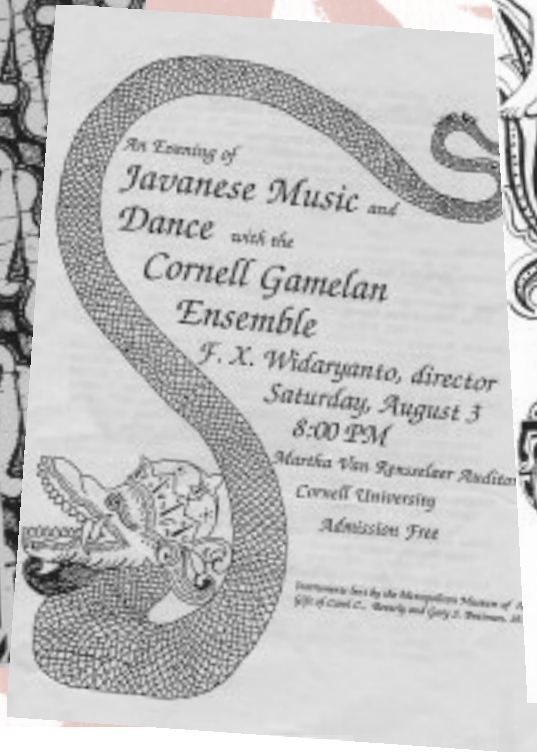
In 1964, the Indonesian government sent a half a dozen Javanese and Balinese gamelans to be displayed and played at their pavilion in the New York Worlds' Fair. The gamelans were housed in different settings in the pavilion, which was one of the largest in the Fair. It was so designed, under the supervision of President Soekarno, to impress fair-goers with the richness and diversity of Indonesian cultural accomplishments. When the Indonesians pulled out of the fair in March of 1965, in part because of the United States' support for Malaysia in the confrontation over the future of the island of Borneo, some staff members at the Indonesian pavilion were able to sell the gamelans to different American parties. Wesleyan University bought a complete Javanese set. University of Michigan bought another. And Carroll Music, the largest percussion rental company in the East, owned by the Bratman brothers, Gary and Carroll, a prominent New York City percussionist, bought a third. (See <http://www.spaceagepop.com/bratman.htm>).

Wesleyan's music program was already developing into one of the two largest for the study of music from around the world. Its curriculum in musicology was unusual in its emphasis on performance as the best way to learn about musical-cultural diversity, to appreciate cultural accomplishments, and to develop and interpret scholarship on the theory and history of musical cultures. There were already master musicians from South India as artists in residence on Wesleyan's faculty, teaching performance of classical Carnatic music to undergraduates and a few graduate students. Soon after the gamelan arrived, three Javanese dancers and musicians took up residence as well, and, later, musicians from Japan, Korea, and Ghana.

Meanwhile, back in New York City, Carroll Music had bought their Javanese gamelan with the thought that, in the 1960s, music making on unusual percussion instruments from around the world would be a coming thing. While that has certainly happened in the time since then, Carroll's complete Javanese gamelan remained in its warehouse, each of the 60 instruments boxed in its own elaborate percussion instrument box, for twenty years until when, in the mid-1970s, the Bratmans decided that rather than lend out the instruments one or two at a time – since no one seemed to want to rent a complete set – they would donate their gamelan to the Metropolitan Museum of Arts Department of Musical Instruments. And, realizing that Carroll's gamelan was a fine working set, worthy to be played upon and not to be exhibited silent, as a work of art in a museum, the Met offered it on long-term loan to Cornell University's Department of Music. (More on this later.)

Today there are upwards of 100 gamelan ensembles in the United States alone (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_gamelan_ensembles_in_the_United_States), and many more around the world, outside of Indonesia. These numbers tell a story of success. My own experience is probably typical of the reason for this success.

Wesleyan had a few non-Western "world music" groups to join in the 1960s. I was an undergraduate there in the early 1960s and I joined the South Indian vocal study group with some musical friends then. It and the other offerings that followed were taught by performers from the cultures themselves. The music was novel, but the experience of communal perform-



You get to play and learn about Indonesia...you get double the experience...that's one of the best things about the class. —Jonathan Stromas

ance and learning entirely aurally-orally through imitation of masters, some of whom had little English – and that didn't matter – was life changing. The sounds directly communicated with me despite my foreign background.

As an MA student in music at Wesleyan, I joined the gamelan group when the instruments arrived there in 1965. By then I could easily “tune in” to its complicated compositions and enjoyed trying to play many of the instruments. Javanese gamelan music is unique in that it provides “entry level” parts to play and doesn't require virtuosity to begin playing in the group, but rather is based on inclusiveness and community development.

After completing my MA, and studying Indonesian at Yale in the Summer Language Institute, I traveled to Java to study singing and playing in more concentrated doses and to learn more about why the spirit of gamelan developed and what its current status in Indonesia was. I continued that study as a Ph.D. student in Cornell's Modern Indonesia Project in 1972 and began the Cornell Gamelan Ensemble.

When I arrived at Cornell as a graduate student in 1972, there was already a chamber ensemble-sized group of gamelan instruments there. These instruments, on loan from a Cornell engineering graduate and Indonesia USAID Food-for-Peace employee, Harrison Parker, had been used periodically in the 1960s by students in the Southeast Asia Program to provide occasional entertainment for Program functions. First, as a graduate student in government and then as a professor, Ben

Anderson was a central figure in these groups. I had heard that he played *gender*, which he had studied with several teachers in Java. A linguistics graduate student from Jogjakarta, Supomo Poedjosoedarmo, was both a gamelan musician and occasionally a *dhalang* for short wayang performances at some of these occasions. When I arrived, the instruments were in the care of Pak Subandi Djajengwasito, another linguistics doctoral student. He mentioned that there had been little gamelan activity for the preceding several years. Because I had just returned from a couple of years gamelan instruction in Java, and because I had an interest in keeping performance of gamelan alive at Cornell in the years that I studied musicology and Southeast Asia at Cornell, I asked my advisors in the music department if they had any objections to my offering a study-group in gamelan. They were supportive, and I organized what soon came to be known as Cornell Gamelan Ensemble in the summer of 1972. From that time to the present—except for a one-year hiatus when I taught at SUNY-Binghamton, a couple of years when other Cornell graduate students led the group, and one year when most of the teaching of gamelan parts was done by an Indonesian visiting artist who was here under a Fulbright visit-

I am so musically untalented...that's why this course is really good for me. I was interested in music when I was younger—but notation and everything like that I couldn't follow—I was a slow learner. Everyone talks about gamelan being such an opposite way to approach music that for me it's actually like I am learning music for the first time, versus feeling really confined and frustrated. —Lauren Valchuis



Gamelan Profiles...

Our audiences are attracted to the sounds of gamelan. Some describe it as like flowing or falling water, some as energizing bright bells. Some find it an aid to soothing meditation. The percussive interplay is captivating, and all these characteristics are immediately available to listeners. It may be loud or soft, and sounds compelling close up or from great distances. Its varying repetitious patterns are stabilizing but never boring. It can be stately. It can be playful.

As students learn more, they begin to respect how gamelan is revered in Indonesia to accompany ceremonies, celebrations, and sacred traditions. Gamelan can open the door to distant and very old civilizations. Books and lectures have their place as

vehicles of learning, but performing music has a uniquely direct avenue.

Cornell's music department, the Cornell Modern Indonesian Project, and the Cornell Southeast Asia Program have supported gamelan instruction to make historical learning more coherent and in the present. It also provides variation to, and a critical comparative perspective to use in evaluating the musical traditions more commonly taught.

Music is a frequent world traveler. Over these past forty years, songs and musical textures from around the world have become available in live renditions, recorded, or via the internet, to people in almost every corner of the world.



MARTIN F. HATCH

- Founder and Director of Cornell Gamelan Ensemble (since 1972)
- Associate Professor of Music and Asian Studies, Cornell University
- Editor of *Asian Music* (1985-2004)
- Ph.D. Cornell University, Musicology (1980)
Dissertation: "Lagu, Laras, Layang; Rethinking Melody in Javanese Music"
- M.A. Wesleyan University, Music (1969)
- Indonesian National Academy of Javanese Music (A.S.K.I.), Surakarta, Indonesia 1970-71 Special student in Indonesian music
- B.A. Wesleyan University, English and Music (1963)

Author of

- "Popular Music in Indonesia," in *World Music, Politics and Social Change* (Manchester University Press) 47-67. (1990, reprint of 1985).
- "Social Change and the Functions of Music in Java," in *Explorations in Ethnomusicology: Essays in Honor of David P. McAllester* (Detroit Monographs in Musicology, #9) 69-76. (1986).
- "Southeast Asia," "gamelan," "gendhing," "slendro," "pelog," and "pathet" for *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 3rd edition (Harvard University Press). (1986).

Students have included:

Triwidyarningsih Harjito, Heather MacLachlan, Bethany Collier, Kim Khoi Nguyen, Arsenio Nicolas, Jr., Sumarsam, Hans Woicke, Jan Mrazek, Jonathan Perry, Toni Shapiro-Phim



I NYOMAN SUADIN


- Born in Tabanan, Bali, 1964
- Participated in a children's gamelan group in his village of Kerambitan
- Formal training at KOKAR, the Conservatory of the Performing Arts, in Denpasar, Bali
- Came to the United States to play gamelan for the Indonesian Embassy, 1988

Has taught gamelan at:

- Cornell University
- Eastman School of Music in Rochester
- Swarthmore College
- Bard College
- University of Maryland

In Addition:

- Founder and artistic director of Gamelan Mitra Kusuma, a community gamelan in Mount Rainer, Maryland:
<http://www.dcgamelan.com/aboutus.html>
- Has made numerous recordings and received nearly a dozen awards for music and dance from the prestigious Bali Arts Festival.

Understanding their meaning becomes increasingly important for those who wish to distinguish and discriminate between sound and the messages of vital traditions of the past and present. I hope that students past and future tune in as well. 

*This has been an interesting way to play
in a different kind of ensemble. ...
You really have to listen to other people. ...*

—Lisa Raylesberg



Professor Martin Hatch teaching elementary school children to play a piece on the gamelan, circa 1980



BETHANY J. COLLIER

- Assistant Professor of Music, Bucknell University
- Director of Bucknell Gamelan *Lembah Banteng*
- Director of the Cornell Gamelan Ensemble (2007-2008)
- Ph.D. Cornell University, Musicology (2007)
Dissertation: “The ‘Chinese’ in Contemporary Balinese Performing Art: Stories, Objects, and Representations”
- Fulbright Scholar, Bali, Indonesia (2004-2005)
- M.A. Cornell University, Musicology (2003)
- B.A. College of the Holy Cross, Music (2000)

Author of:

- “Raising Funds, Lifting Spirits: Intersections of Music and Humanitarian Aid in Tsunami Relief Efforts” in *Aceh: History, Politics, Culture*, ed. Arndt Graf, Susanne Schroeter, and Edwin Wieringa, (Singapore: ISEAS), forthcoming.
- Review of *Power Plays: Wayang Golek Puppet Theater of West Java*. By Andrew N. Weintraub. In *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 67/1: 355-357 (February 2008).

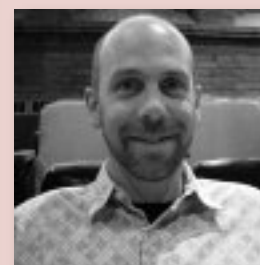
In Addition:

- Organizer of “Continuities and Change: A Celebration of Balinese Music, Theatre, and Dance” College of the Holy Cross (November 2003)
- Member of Gamelan Dharma Swara
<http://www.dharmaswara.org/>
- Active in outreach to school children and teachers, leading dozens of hands-on workshops in Ithaca and beyond.

A warm welcome to:

CHRISTOPHER J. MILLER

- Gamelan Instructor, Cornell University (2008-2009)
- Director Cornell Gamelan Ensemble (2008-2009)
- Ph.D. candidate in Ethnomusicology, Wesleyan University, Dissertation: “Nativist Cosmopolitanism and Radical Traditionalism: Making Modern Music in Indonesia”
- M.A. Wesleyan University, Music (2002)
Thesis project and document: *as time is stretched...*, a performance/installation for Javanese gamelan instruments and other sound sources. And “‘as time is stretched...’: Theoretical and Compositional Investigations of Rhythm and Form in Javanese Gamelan Music.”
- College of Indonesian Arts (S.T.S.I. Surakarta, Indonesia) 20 months (October 1993-May 1995) independent study of traditional Javanese gamelan music.
- B.A. Simon Fraser University, Fine and Performing Arts (1992)



Author of:

- “Orchids (and Other Difficult Flowers) Revisited: A Reflection on Composing for Gamelan in North America.” *The World of Music*, 47/3: 81-112 (2005).

In Addition:

- Led numerous gamelan workshops with elementary through high school age students and adults.
- Has taught gamelan courses at: Wesleyan, Smith, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of British Columbia.

For more information and to hear audio clips of his work, visit
<http://cjmillar.web.wesleyan.edu/introduction.html>

Re-Possessing Lanna...

NORTHERN THAI NEO-TRADITIONALISM



Offerings to the spirits
alongside the
Superhighway, Chiang Mai

AND THE FUTURE OF THE CITY



Andrew Alan Johnson,
Ph.D. candidate in anthropology

To the visitor to Chiang Mai, the marketing of Lanna comes at you like a gold-embossed teak tank. From the crossed-gable *galare* design in concrete on the airport to the “traditional” symbols for the floors of the shopping mall’s parking garage, Chiang Mai businesses make continual reference to that kingdom that ruled the north of Thailand from the 13th century until the 16th and that has become an endless mine of nostalgia for modern-day middle-class Thais. During my fieldwork in Chiang Mai, the Tourist Authority of Thailand was in the middle of aggressively promoting Chiang Mai to tourists (foreign and domestic) they termed “of value,” meaning those who would stay in more expensive hotels and go to spas. Boutique hotels capitalizing on nostalgia sprung up around the area: “Yesterday” opened in Chiang Mai’s “Bangkok Zone” of Nimmanhaeminda Road, the “Eurana” promised a fusion of European and Lanna hospitality, and the giant Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi re-created a Lanna landscape (a room which cost roughly three hundred US dollars a night), complete with temples/hotel rooms bordering a river, which in turn was staffed by “authentic” villagers. Spas in turn boosted their images by promoting “ancient Lanna massage,” the “four-handed Lanna farmer’s massage,”¹ or even the “hands from the hills tribal massage.” Everything was Lanna, and everything made reference to *watthanatham lanna thai*: “Lanna Thai culture.”

But something was rotten in the *monthon* of Phayap. While Chiang Mai culture was in the full throes of promotion and preservation, local academics were full of dire predictions. “Why don’t you go to Nan?” said one architect that I had befriended. “That’s still Lanna. Chiang Mai is so developed now, it’s just like Bangkok. All of this new construction, it’s just awful [*mua*].” When I protested that it was precisely this spectral aspect of nostalgia and change I was interested in, he gave in, partially: “Well good for you, then. But you should still go to Nan. They still have the old way of life [*withi chiwit dang deum*].” The pessimistic response was not limited to academics. The abbot of a temple in the Mae Taeng suburbs of Chiang Mai showed me around the massive construction project taking place at his

temple: they were to build new stupas [*chedi*] to attract pilgrims from all around the country interested in the Lanna zodiac. The *chedi* were now only concrete shells, but soon they would be finished. Later, however, his cheerful tone faded and he advised me: “You should go to Burma. The North has lost its traditions. If you want to see *real* Northern culture, why don’t you go to Burma? There were some *farang* [Westerners] in here the other day, and they were going to go to Burma, too. It will be good for you.” In these formulations, culture was something vital and valuable: a spirit of a particular place, and its disappearance, according to the architect, the abbot, and a host of other local culture brokers in Chiang Mai, meant a whole host of problems.

Friends and informants in Chiang Mai continually promoted certain areas over others to me as sites that retained some degree of “Lanna” authenticity. A trend that continued in the advice given to me in Chiang Mai was the citation of other foreigners at the supposedly more authentic site – Burma was a good place to go because other *farang* were going. A friend, Kung, who had been teaching me Northern dialect reassured me that I had chosen the right spot to do my field research in Chiang Mai. “Of course you should do your work here!” she said, “You’ll love it! *Farang* always love Chiang Mai. There are so many here!” Within Chiang Mai, many informants tried to direct me towards special sections of town, especially those inhabited by a certain group of craftspeople: woodcarvers, silver-smiths, or ethnic minorities such as Tai Lue or Tai Khoen, areas which were specially designated and marked as “cultural.” In Chiang Mai, my identity as a foreigner blended in with my identity as an anthropologist. In the world of cultural tourism, all *farang* are visitors and visitors want to see something “real,” something “remote:” the survivals of the ancient, “authentic” culture of Lanna.

For anthropologists and tourists interested in “authentic” culture, Chiang Mai, as a repository for national nostalgia (Morris 2000: 16-7 n.6), becomes the natural destination, as Jarupat (2007)’s title proclaims: *Thiaw Lanna Taam Ha Phumipanya Thai* [*Travels to Lanna to Follow Thai Local*

Knowledge]. Lanna here becomes a stylistic subset of Thai culture, continually reproduced and promoted, and quite often created anew. This process creates a cycle wherein something – a style of dress, a festival, an architectural feature – “Lanna” is invented by one party, then becomes promoted by culture brokers (by which I mean planners, architects, tourist agencies, NGOs, and others involved in analyzing and presenting an image of the city), and then over time becomes promoted as an object of study. This creates a hyperreal, continually invented sense of culture, a process that historian Nidthi Aeursriwongse evocatively calls the “packaging of Chiang Mai’s dreams” (*jat fun*) (Nidthi 1991:180).

Therefore, for some of the population, Chiang Mai is a “city of culture” not only due to its past, but because its culture has received so much invention, promotion and development. Even for those critical of the expansion of the culture industry in Chiang Mai, such work in theory will revitalize a potentially ailing city: the Ministry of Culture states that culture is one of the fundamental prerequisites for development (*lak nai gaan pattana*), and as such it is the Ministry’s task to improve upon Thai culture and heritage. The idiom is not only to preserve, but rather to expand, to make better. Culture can be promoted, developed, improved, and made.

Editing the North

Making Lanna culture “progress” also requires its reconfiguration and the elimination of embarrassing parts. Another, related reaction to my statement that I was working in Chiang Mai was to emphasize the beauty of Northern Thai language. People both in Chiang Mai and Bangkok would often respond to my statement that I was working in Chiang Mai by telling me how slow and polite the local dialect [*kam meuang*] was spoken. “*Saa-wat dii jaooooo*!” a graduate student from Bangkok said to her Chiang Mai-born colleague, drawing out the falling tone of the last word, a feminine marker of politeness. “Isn’t that how it goes? *Jaooooooooo*.” Such a characterization is flatly contradicted by the rapid-fire *kam meuang* shouted by older women at a spirit medium festival, the boisterous mock arguments erupting over a bottle of whisky among young *meuang* men and women, or the rushed, staccato tones of gossip exchanged at the market. When I mocked the slow, dreamy pace of faux-Northern speech (liberally interspersed with long, drawn-out exclamations of *jao*) in a Bangkok-produced TV soap opera, a Northern friend of mine corrected me, claiming

that the commonly-heard rapid speech wasn’t proper and wasn’t polite. While the soap opera didn’t get all the words and tones quite right, at least to her it was nice to hear.

One must speak Northern enough, but not too much, in order to speak polite Northern. In other words, “raw Northern,” as one fashion designer put it, is in itself rude, while Central Thai complete with rolled *rs* is polite. If one was to be politely Northern in a way that would do justice to a cultural, civilized city, one had to blend the languages. As an example, “yes” or “that’s right” in Central Thai is *chai*, while in Northern it is the same as in Laotian: *maen*. During an interview, I was trying my best to speak Northern with Noi, a forty-something Chiang Mai woman who owned her own “Lanna-style” shop. I replied to a question of hers with an enthusiastic *maen*. She stopped what she was saying and looked at me. “Now you’re speaking Lao,” she said “or Isaan. Chiang Mai people say *jai*,” using an unaspirated form of the Central *chai*. Using *jai* instead of *chai* would be consistent in a certain logic with a Northerner speaking Central Thai – many words that are aspirated in Central (“Chiang Mai”) are unaspirated in Northern (“Jiang Mai”). I protested that many people that I spoke with use *maen* often and I was sure that that indeed was a Northern term. She was adamant: “Those people that you’re talking with aren’t polite. Or maybe they’re from Isaan or Laos.” A *polite* Northerner would use *jai*.

Noi’s insistence on the use of *jai* shows the extent to which Northernness has been re-created. She is insisting on regional difference – her shop was evidence of that, and that she did use a variant of Northern dialect in her speech – but only as long as regional difference was commensurable with bourgeois polite-



A spirit medium at a yok khruu ceremony, San Sai, Chiang Mai

ness. It was more than just national belonging that was important for Noi – it was also stylistic consumability. Her shop and personal means of dress revolved around the idea of the stylish, graceful Northern woman, and to admit Northern similarities with stigmatized regions such as Isaan would be decreasing the value of Northern *watthanatham*.

The rise of interest in Northern – “Lanna” – studies [*lanna seuksaa*] that emphasize an authentic and different *watthanatham* began in earnest during the 1980s and was fired by both the growing national trend towards regional studies and the promotion of Chiang Mai as a site of tourism. The trend then diverged from presenting Chiang Mai as a source of Thainess or a place where primordial Thai lessons could be learned, to a place where difference (to a point, as I have just mentioned) was emphasized, where culture was becoming a source of revenue and development in itself, and the explosion in literature pertaining to “Lanna” was interested in documenting this cultural “uniqueness” which was presented as already in a state of collapse. The enemy here was not (usually, but see Thanet 1993) Central Thai customs and language, but rather it lay in the homogenizing force of globalization as articulated through Bangkok’s mass media.

The key to saving Chiang Mai, according to many of these texts, lay in preserving local “identity” [*ekkalak*], which was also conveniently the cornerstone of cultural tourism (both by tourists from Bangkok and tourists from Chiang Mai), so local knowledge was therefore often in the service of business, and the development of mass-produced Chiang Mai-related writings and Chiang Mai’s tourist industry went hand-in-hand. In the process of producing knowledge about Chiang Mai, new objects were continually added into the corpus of *watthanatham*: new traditions invented, new rituals developed, all in accordance with the idea of *watthanatham* as a technology, a technology which required developing in order to allow Chiang Mai to reach its true potential of development.

The symbol that best epitomizes this dual creation of tourism and knowledge creation is the *khantoke* – a dinner show of hill-tribe dances developed to promote tourism in the North. Yet despite these “inauthentic” origins, the *khantoke* features in much of the Thai-language writing concerning Northern tradition:

Lannathai is a region that developed along with art and culture from ancient times [*boraan*], and used to be the kingdom of Lannathai from the 18th-20th Buddhist centuries (13th-15th AD). There was King Mangrai who was the first king of the Mangrai dynasty, and many other developments (*patthana*), such as government, religion, arts, culture [*watthanatham*], leisure, eating, ordination, marriage, etc. The rem-

nants of these are things that we should study in earnest, and have more people interested in them and to get others to write about them in many languages, and be an example for researchers. Here, I am speaking of the “Khantoke,” which is one part of the arts and one part of the ritual [*praphenii*] of the *khantoke dinner*, or the ritual of the *khantoke* of Lannathai. (Manee 1989:228).

Manee, an anthropologist of Chiang Mai and *khon muang* himself, highlights the differences between *watthanatham* and what anthropologists typically think of as “culture.” The *praphenii* – the same word used for “ritual,” “rite,” or “ceremony” – is applied to an unabashedly invented tradition (see Hobsbawm 1983) for the purpose of generating interest in Northern studies. In his work on Northern Thai rituals, *Praphenii Sip Song Deuan Lanna Thai* [*Twelve Months of Lanna Thai Rituals*], Manee places the *khantoke* in the same category as animist ritual, Buddhist New Year’s ceremonies, and the like.

I include the example of the *khantoke* here to demonstrate how the invention of tradition and the creation of new knowledge about Chiang Mai are linked. In other words: writing about Chiang Mai often creates itself in a self-reinforcing spiral.

The architect of the *khantoke* was the economist, businessman, and anthropologist Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda. Kraisri was one scion of the powerful Sino-Northern Nimmanhaeminda family, one of a handful of Chinese families that migrated to the North during the 19th century, one of which also is the Shinawatra family of the former prime minister Thaksin. Kraisri, having studied abroad at University of Pennsylvania and Harvard, became a spokesman for Northern Thai culture and history after having returned to the North to be the regional manager for Bangkok Bank, and became (along with Manee), one of the principal authors of the resurgence of Northern studies. He was also its tourist promoter: during the 1950s, Kraisri introduced the *khantoke* into the Chiang Mai tourism scene, also using it to bolster his local businesses. One of his promotional ideas, a call upon all *khantoke* guests to wear the indigo-dyed *seua moh hom*, has had a profound effect upon Northern symbolism: in 1957, Kraisri called upon all men to wear the *moh hom* to the *kantoke*, as he wanted to promote the production of these shirts in Phrae province. What had once been one variety of a diverse array of male attire had become selected by a local businessman for massive promotion (Thanet 1993:45). Three years later, in 1960, the newly-appointed governor of the province,² after having attended the *kantoke*, decreed that government officials should wear the *moh hom* as a symbol of their regional pride (Thanet 1993:47). In 1987, this call was echoed by the elected municipal office [*thaesabaan*]. It is now the regional uniform for Fridays.

"Traditional" Northern dances performed for tourists, Khantoke, Chiang Mai.



The Supernatural and the Cultural

But what is gained through all of this emphasis on the promotion of *watthanatham*? Certainly there is some value in creating an aesthetics of place, and such an aesthetic would aid efforts for local politics and tourism. But I am drawn also to the structural position of *watthanatham* as a nebulous force that inhabits the city and ensures its prosperity and success. With culture, the thought goes, there will be peace, wealth, and coolness. But the idea of this nebulous beneficial force inhabiting the city is not new. Chiang Mai has a group of spirits which guard and protect it, and through a sacred urban layout, the city remained pure and ensured its continued prosperity. Of my informants, some believed in these protective spirits [*phi a-hak* (*a-rak* in Central) *meuang*], others emphatically did not, and still others were more comfortable to exist in the gray area of "I don't believe in them, but I don't offend them" [*mai cheua, yaa lop-loo*] that Pattana Kitiarsa (2002) discusses. What I wish to emphasize in the light of the previous discussion of *watthanatham* is the interplay between *watthanatham* and *sayasaat* [the supernatural, especially religious practices that are not wholly Buddhist] as forces that can inhabit and possess places and people in Chiang Mai.

Watthanatham, as a correlate of the German term *bildung* and perhaps the English term "high culture," is a quality inherent in a well-developed, advanced civilization. It, unlike "vernacular culture" or the German *kultur*, increases with prosperity.

Similarly, the guardian spirits of a city and the practice of worshipping them, activities which fall under the umbrella of *sayasaat*, also ensure prosperity and development. In fact, the term รักษา *raksa* is the root word of both the guardian spirits [ผีอารักษ์] and the process of preserving [รักษา] *watthanatham*.

The two idioms – *sayasaat* and *watthanatham* – are also used to describe the same activities by different informants in different contexts. While a *yok khruu* ceremony – a rite honoring the spirits of ancestral teachers – is undoubtedly *sayasaat*, the same rite is described by many middle-class Chiang Mai residents as being beneficial in terms of *watthanatham*. Each reading: the first describing how the spirits will work for the benefit of the community, and the second describing how the sense of community values and cultural advancement will ensure the benefit of the community, shows the rite as having use-value.

I attended many *yok khruu* ceremonies, but I would like to compare two: one conducted with attention to supernatural benefit and the second with attention to cultural benefit (of course, attendees at either might identify both qualities as being present). The first was held in the center of a newly-constructed superhighway encircling the city. This expanded median was the site of a ruined temple, of which the *chedi* remained. It was also near *khuang singh*, the Plaza of Lions, a field outside of the city proper where Chiang Mai's kings would marshal their forces. A spirit medium of relatively high status within the city was to be the sponsor of a *yok khruu* ceremony, honoring the spirits that would soon descend for the city's prosperity.

At the ceremony, a spirit of revelry prevailed. Spirit mediums [*maa kii* – the ridden horse – in Northern Thai], who were generally middle-aged women arrived and donned brightly-colored costumes and turbans. These older mediums were interspersed with younger male mediums, most of whom were gay or *kathoe* [transgendered]. Some mediums drank heavily, and later in the afternoon the atmosphere grew more raucous. The mediums outnumbered the onlookers – friends, relatives, or the curious, who sat near the back. In their brightly-colored outfits, the mediums formed a long circle around a dance floor with their backs to the audience, and the possessed danced to the amplified sounds of a brass band – a sort of big-band reimagination of Northern and Central Thai traditional music. In the dance floor and on the sidelines, the mediums cheerfully greeted each other with prominent displays of respect and affection. Tired medi-

...watthanatham has emerged to fill the void that sayasaat has vacated. Watthanatham becomes the answer to "what insubstantial force will ensure Northern Thailand's prosperity?"

ums would drift back to where the laity sat, and occasionally let out a retching sound as they expelled one spirit to welcome another.

For a while, I sat alone. Mae Kham, my friend and informant, an older woman who worked in a tobacco field most days, was currently possessed by a young child, a spirit who had yet to meet me. The spirit ignored me, and so I sat towards the back and talked with some other visitors. A self-styled professor described to me his theory that “nanotechnology” would explain mediumship one day; perhaps these individuals all had some mystical circuitry that allowed them a greater consciousness. A woman with a “Development Group for Chiang Mai” shirt ran about, serving water to a group of young mediums, disciples of a Hindu god, dressed in Indian saris and whose dances mimicked Bollywood moves.


The sponsor of the rite sat in a prominent location near the dance floor, and newly arrived mediums came forward to *wai* [show respect by placing the hands folded in front] her. Laity lit candles and incense at the ruined *chedi* or occasionally chatted or joked with a medium. The atmosphere was that of a party, complete with dancing and alcohol.

The rite led to a culmination at four in the afternoon, as the anthem to the current king of Thailand played, and all the mediums turned towards the Thai flag to show their respect. The band finally stopped, and the noise of the traffic from the super-highway on either side of the ceremony emerged from the background. The guests drifted towards their assembled motorbikes; the party was over.

The second ceremony that I wish to compare to this first one was held on the campus of Chiang Mai University, in the center of a teak planting project. It was held in order to pay respects to Withi Panichapan, one of the founders of the Fine Arts Department at the university and an author and promoter of Lanna cultural works. At this event, too, there was a great deal of dancing: dance troupes performed various traditional dances

from Southeast Asia in traditional costume, while Aajaan Withi sat in a place of respect in the front of the ceremony. The trappings were the same: behind the professor were the same assortment of fruits and pig’s heads that had adorned the altar at the spirit medium’s rite. Yet no one here was possessed, rather, they had assembled to bring forth not the living spirits of the past, but the various cultural heritages of the region.

When I first arrived at the event, I thought that there were mediums present, confusing the dancers in “ancient” attire for more elaborate versions of the young male mediums at the prior ceremony. My question: “Has the spirit descended yet?” was taken by a group of young dancers as a joke, and a rather embarrassing one at that. But there is a similarity. These “cultural” dancers embody the spirits of the past in the same way as do the mediums, although instead of being the “ridden horse,” they are instead the conscious masters of culture.

At this event, *watthanatham* in an explicit form: dances, costume, and the like; has taken the place of *sayasaat* at the spirit mediums’ ritual. Undoubtedly this is due to skepticism about the veracity of mediums’ performances, a common theme when dealing with spirit mediums, as Morris notes (Morris 2000, Blimes 1995). But functionally, *watthanatham* has emerged to fill the void that *sayasaat* has vacated. *Watthanatham* becomes the answer to “what insubstantial force will ensure Northern Thailand’s prosperity?” In each case, however, the inarticulate spirit of the past emerges for the direct usefulness and benefit of the present. And in each case, the inhabiting spirit always has to keep up with the times. Cultural knowledge is then cast as being invariably good, invariably valuable and always commensurable with modern bourgeois sensibilities (see also Lysa 1998). Such a version of *watthanatham* does a disservice to the truly strange, to the divisive, to the real “other.” The quest for “authentic culture” does not, then, truly seek authenticity, but rather it is a search for what is already known, packaged in a peasant’s shirt. 

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¹ It is a point of open speculation as to whether the massage was intended for a four-handed Lanna farmer, or was to be performed by a four-handed masseuse who farmed in his/her free time.

² The *phu wa jangwat* [provincial governor] is drawn from the ranks of the national bureaucracy and appointed by the central government rather than elected. *Phu wa* are not generally from the region.



Flashlight Dance: WHAT A FEELING!



Jane M. Ferguson, Australian National University, (Cornell Ph.D., anthropology 2008)

It is a brisk December morning in the Shan hills of upland Southeast Asia. This anthropologist from Cornell University lives with a family of former Shan United Revolutionary Army soldiers and affiliates, among whom is another anthropologist of sorts. Grandpa emerges from the house, and wearing a knit cap, raggedy sweater and a Burmese *longgyi* (sarong) steps out onto the teak verandah. Noting the cold condensation collected on the floorboards, he proceeds with caution. The air is chilly, yet humid, such that when the rooster strains his neck and crows, a cloud of condensation puffs around his beak. It looks like the smoke cloud that emerges from a rifle barrel following a shot. When Grandpa reaches the verandah railing, he leans forward to survey the area, and shouts, *Hong Num! Ma! Ao khao kwa ban sao na ti!*

Fully understanding Grandpa's orders, Hong Num slowly crawls out from her bed. With her head down as she rubs the sleep away from her eyes, the little six-year-old trudges to the kitchen to get the tray of rice and snacks Grandpa has carefully prepared to give to the spirit house in the corner of the property. Grandpa places his hands on the railing and supervises with an authoritarian air as Hong Num, shivering in her light blue PE tracksuit with the round Burmese silk-screened name of her former elementary school on the jacket back, weaves through the garden and its clotheslines to get to the concrete spirit house. She places the tray of food on the little porch of the structure, and immediately darts back inside to crawl under the bedcovers.

Satisfied for the time being, Grandpa continues his daily routine. With the slow, but determined shuffle of an 86 year old

with necessary and important chores to do, he heads into the kitchen. A separate structure for the kitchen is typical for Shan houses, I've learned; kitchen fires thus burn down only the kitchen, not the entire home. Now Grandpa is on an important mission: to verify the contents of the refrigerator. This fact-finding operation repeats itself frequently throughout the day, and we watch Grandpa as he shuffles into the kitchen, opens the fridge door, and leans in, peering to inspect the things inside. This routine carries on well past dark, and Grandpa carries a large flashlight with a self-contained charger. When Grandpa isn't checking the contents of the fridge, or making sure that the dishes are properly placed on the drying rack (plates arranged by size on the left, glasses on the right) he is inspecting the water level in the bathroom basins, or ordering about the two young children to feed the chickens, to retrieve eggs, or to feed the dogs. The chores are endless for the reluctantly cooperative children, and subject to great scrutiny by their ever-complaining Grandpa. Although there are three dogs, Grandpa commands the children to feed just two of them, as one is often punished for his unfortunate favorite hobby of pulling the tail feathers out of the roosters. Grandpa denies this poor pooch his daily food for said didactic purposes, and then marvels that the critter still hangs around our yard, not dying in spite of his imposed hunger strike. We all neglect to mention to Grandpa that the canine might have hominid sympathizers.

Grandpa's contemporary mundane — but oddly comical — daily routines do belie his fascinating biography. Born to Chinese traders in Mandalay in 1919, during the Second World War Grandpa had been forced to flee Burma, and he made his way through the Shan States en route to the Yunnan Province. He carried his things in a rice sack as he traveled by foot, and at night, he removed his few possessions from the sack, and used it as a sleeping bag while he hid in the forest. When the war ended, he settled in the Shan State of Möng Pan, married a Shan woman, and became a shopkeeper. I think his micro-managerial skills are residual practices from decades of actually keeping shop. In the late 1970's, his daughter joined the Shan insurgency against the Burmese military, and when she retired after seven years' active combat, she settled in this Shan village just on the Thai side of the border.

She is the head of the household we all share, and was begged by her brother and sister-in-law to take Grandpa in after they became fed up with his constant interference in their household matters at their home in Möng Pan. She reluctantly agreed to do so. It was only about three years ago that Grandpa joined his daughter's household on the Thai side of the border. Myself having become gradually more accustomed to living in Thailand, and now this village of Shan migrants, I find Grandpa's apprehension and understanding of Thai customs to be utterly fascinating. The story of young Hong Num being ordered by Grandpa to place an offering at the spirit house is one such example.

In villages in the Shan State, there is usually one structure for the community spirit, or the *sao möng*. But, the Thai have the practice of placing small houses on individual properties for the household spirit, the *chao ti*. While the invested meaning differs, the names are similar in Shan and Thai, respectively, as is the necessity to pay respect to the spirits. What makes things particularly confusing is that here in this Shan village on the Thai side of the border, there is the house for the community guardian spirit, the *sao möng*, and, as a gesture to incorporate some Thai symbolic practices, many Shan households have placed Thai-style spirit houses in front of their homes for the *chao ti*. The latter is the object of Grandpa's mobilization of child labor, as it seems that he would like the children to be appropriately socialized for life in Thailand. But, because Grandpa is a recent migrant from the Shan State, the *chao ti* is new to him, and there is potential confusion regarding the nomenclature of the spirit inhabitants of these little houses. Grandpa resolves this issue in his own way. He has taken to calling the household guardian spirit the *chao na ti* which, as we have speculated, is one of the handful of Thai words that Grandpa gleaned by watching TV. *Chao na ti* means "employee" or "government official." So, twice daily, Grandpa orders the children to take the small offering of snacks and water to feed the government official. And, out of deference to Grandpa's senior status (not to mention a desire to hear him shout out this entertaining misnomer twice a day)



Left: A view out the backyard of a Shan household

Above: Rice-paddied valleys of the Shan plateau

nobody informs Grandpa that the household guardian spirit is actually called a *chao ti*.

As Grandpa ensures that the household government official is adequately fed by the children and carries out the rest of his daily tasks, I develop my own routines of visiting certain informants and taking my Shan lessons by day, playing bass or guitar with a local pick-up rock band after dinner, and then quietly reading or watching TV with the Shan family at night. Late at night, once everyone else has gone to bed, I type up my field notes on my laptop computer. With the laptop, I quietly slink to the other side of the room to use the phone cable and connect to the internet via my dial-up account. Sitting on the sofa with just the glow of the laptop screen, I notice the subtle emergence of a



beam of light as it cuts through the dark room. The light comes out from under the mosquito net of Grandpa's bed, crosses directly in front of me, and shines to the wall on the opposite side. The illuminated circle creeps up the wall, finally engulfing the wall clock, and then cuts out a split second later.

Sure enough, the following morning, I overhear as Grandpa reports to his son-in-law:

Jane was up working at 12:35 last night!

Should I receive a call on my mobile phone at an odd hour, the precise time of the initial ring, without fail, will be reported to the others. As are my afternoon snacks. Even if I make fried noodles every single day for weeks on end (which I purposely do as an experiment to see if I can provoke a new comment out of Grandpa) he still broadcasts the details of my afternoon diet to

his daughter (or son-in-law) with the exact same level of enthusiasm as the first day he observed me eating fried noodles. When I emerge from the bathroom after taking a shower, minutes afterwards I notice Grandpa going in to inspect the water level in the basin. Grandpa's empirical methods will not be outdone! He always responds eagerly if I plan to leave the village, wanting to know the complete breakdown of my entire itinerary, and the cost of every bus, train, or plane ticket en route. Any price which exceeds 500 Baht (at the time, about \$15 USD) will be met with the characteristic Shan response of complete astonishment: *Ah-loh-loh-loh-loh-loh!!!*

One such trip of repeated interest and enthusiasm involves my visa runs to the border town of Tachileik, in the Shan State.

I could have extended my research visa in Bangkok, but it is farther from the Shan village, after all, and meanwhile Tachileik has become one of my favorite places on the planet, what with its remarkable tapestry of Shan, Burmese, Thai, Wa, Chinese, Indian, Tai Khun, and Hmong traders. Over several visits, I build a cadre of Tachileik contacts, and now relish the opportunity to seek out the many finer points of this rough and tumble border town. Prior to my departure from the Shan village, people contact me as I assemble a shopping list of various items to bring back for them. The latest VCD of Htun Eindra Bo. *Malaing hmon* (a kind of sweet sold by Indian vendors in Burma). Instant tea salad mix. Chinese grilled duck. The list lengthens proportionally with every trip I make to Tachileik, and my skills at honing in on these unique products also sharpen, as does Grandpa's interest in the particulars of my journey and the products that I could

potentially bring back to him.

Although Grandpa never deviates from his request for a Pizza Hut pizza from Chiang Mai (through trial and error I learn that he is partial to the Super Supreme), for this next Tachileik trip, his desired commodity *du jour* is simply sublime: a new flashlight, just like the one he has, and I am commanded not to pay more than 95 Baht for it. This is his necessary technological apparatus for the routine surveillance of the organizational scheme of the items on the dish rack, checking the chicken coup, the water tanks, and of course, to monitor the bizarre nocturnal practices of the resident anthropologist. Am I complicit in my continued surveillance by agreeing to buy Grandpa another flashlight?

Indeed, I am. After a six-hour bus ride to Chiang Mai, followed by another five hour bus ride to Mae Sai the following day, I browse the stalls of the Tachileik market on foot. I walk up



Far left: Grandpa carrying the spirit house offering tray to the kitchen, accompanied by chickens

Left: An ethnographer in situ

Above: The ethnographer playing in a Shan rock band

to a stand displaying sundry electronic gadgets. I spot a green plastic flashlight with self-contained charger and I venture closer, thus drawing the attention of the vendor, a muslim wearing a vest and a *longgyi*. In semi-confident Burmese I ask how much the flashlight costs, worrying my obvious foreignness might have me in for a soaking. He responds, “Oh! You can speak Burmese! 180 Baht.”

Gaining momentum after having engaged the vendor in dialogue, I respond, “Grandpa told me to pay no more than 95 Baht for this one!”

The man is slightly taken aback, and with a broad grin says, *kaung ba bi* or “All right” and I get the flashlight for 95 Baht. But, for good measure (really out of delight that I have gotten the exact price I was sent on a mission to obtain), I buy an even bigger 150 Baht model with a detachable lamp and separate elastic strap for wearing the lamp on one’s forehead. My mind wanders and I imagine Grandpa sporting the lamp on his head, spelunking though the dark kitchen late at night, verifying the order of the plates on the dish rack. The thought makes me giggle as I stand there at the Tachileik market, waiting for the cheerful vendor to come back with my change.


Upon return to the Shan village, I present my Tachileik booty to the family, and among other gifts, put both large flashlights down on the table directly in front of Grandpa. Knowing that his daughter also mentioned wanting a spare flashlight to keep around the house, after initial inspection of the goods, Grandpa announces, “I’ll take the red one. You can use the green one.” One can easily assume which color flashlight is the bigger, fancier one with the special detachable lamp and elastic strap for mounting the lamp on one’s forehead.

Several months after this flashlight triumph, I venture out

on a two and a half month research trip to urban Burma and several towns in the Shan State. It is during this trip that I receive the sad news of Grandpa’s passing via his distant niece, an NGO worker with email access. As I let the sorrow slowly sink in, I cannot help but imagine my return to the Shan village, and picture Grandpa out on the verandah, waiting to ask me about the cost of every leg of my journey in Burma. Thinking about his eagerness makes my heart heavy in my chest and my voicebox sink to the bottom of my throat. As tears well in my eyes, I feel physically unready to face the reality that I won’t be able to hear his *Ah-loh-loh-loh-loh-loh* response to the price of my bus ticket from Mandalay to Kyauk Me.

The following month, when I do return to the Shan borderland village, I find the household to be as busy as before. The children still run, play, and argue with each other as always, though they are not subjected to the constant daily chores of taking food to the spirit house or tending to the chickens. Absent is the frequent commiseration about Grandpa’s bossiness and his nitpicking complaints about such matters as the level of the water in the bathroom basins. Now, should someone bring up the topic of Grandpa’s ways, there is an atmosphere of affection and nostalgia. Chatting with Grandpa’s son-in-law, I reminisce about Grandpa and talk about the litany of odd routines that constituted his “work” day. My interlocutor chuckles and details one specific impact that Grandpa’s death has had on the household:

Chao na ti tong mai yu hung yao uey!

The government official has been hungry for a quite a while now! 



Beginning Tagalog class with Florio Arguillas, a Filipino graduate student (head of the table), Spring semester 2008, at the SEAP Banquet, April 2008

The Tagalog Program at Cornell

REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST



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Senior Lecturer, Tagalog

I first came to Cornell in the Spring semester of 1988 to teach Tagalog as a Teaching Associate (1988-90; 1991-92) in what was then the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics. I came back in 1997 as a graduate student of Linguistics and taught as a Teaching Assistant for five years (1997-02). The last six years (2002-08) have been in the Department of Asian Studies as a full-time Lecturer.

Throughout those more than 15 years of teaching Tagalog, I have adopted a few teaching methodologies and techniques that I have learned from previous mentors and colleagues along the way, always seeking the one or a combination of a few—eclectic approach, as they say—that will work the best. I am currently using the proficiency-based communicative and functional approach to language instruction. This means that each syllabus is designed to help students learn communicative and functional uses of the language in the real world, targeting all four skills—speaking, listening, reading and writing—at each level. In the beginning level, the focus is a thorough grounding in basic speaking and listening skills with an introduction to reading and writing. The second-year level provides continuing instruction that aims to further develop all four skills. Instruction on conversation skills continues in the third-year level, but emphasis is on reading and formal writing. Students at this level, with approval from the instructor, may choose some of the class materials based on their interest. Finally, an advanced fourth-year level course is available to students who would like to do an independent study on any particular topic.

I have been using “Pilipino Through Self-Instruction” or PITSI (revised 2005, J. U. Wolff, D. Rau and M. T. Savella) as the primary textbook for the beginning and intermediate levels. I was part of the staff that assisted Professor Wolff in the collection of authentic materials and the preparation of exercises for this textbook in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines in the summer of 1987. He, then, gave me an opportunity to work at Cornell for the first time in January 1988 as a Teaching Associate. I helped him in the



Beginning Tagalog class, Fall semester 2004



Advanced Tagalog class, Spring semester 2004

AND FUTURE

supervision of the student assistants in preparing the materials for publication, in field-testing the textbook in Tagalog classes at Cornell (Spring 1988-90) prior to PITSI's publication in 1991, and in the production of the audiotapes accompanying the textbook. It might be worth mentioning at this point that my very first beginning class was not what you would call ordinary—certainly not with the following students taking it—Ben Anderson, Takashi Shiraishi and Der-Hwa Rau. I suppose being a “new kid in town” and therefore, not knowing much about the “who’s who” in SEAP at the time worked in my favor, and turned an otherwise potentially intimidating teaching assignment into just a first teaching job.

PITSI—a four-volume textbook—to my knowledge, has the most extensive and comprehensive coverage of the Tagalog grammar among all the textbooks which are available today for teaching Tagalog as a second language in the first and second years. The looping nature of the materials in it, i.e. succeeding units building up on previous ones making sure that the old materials are continuously being used and reused all the time, and the tons of exercises in it available to students to use on their own in preparation for class, make PITSI an enormously helpful reference for a serious study of the language. However, with the continuing process of change in authentic use of the language and in keeping with the teaching philosophy that I chose to adopt, it became necessary for me to develop my own supplementary pedagogical materials as well. The materials

that I have produced so far, are now available in both the Department and Tagalog supplementary course web pages—through the Learning Resource Center (LRC)—for easy access by the students.

With the assistance of LRC and a student assistant, the audio recordings accompanying PITSI have been uploaded and made accessible through the web links of the LRC (Spring 2008).

Professor Wolff and I also put together a Tagalog reader for the intermediate and early advanced levels (1989-90). Some of the materials in this reader are meant to supplement PITSI, and the rest are follow-up materials to it for the third year level courses.

In addition to the supplementary materials for the first two levels and the reader discussed previously, I have also been continuously compiling reading and video materials since 2002. The latter is made possible by a subscription to two Filipino cable channels—The Mabuhay Channel and ABS-CBN. These reading and video materials are a mix of my own choices and those of my previous students’ in the advanced level based on their interest. Some of the topics/themes covered by these materials are as follows: traditional music/dances, folk medicine, overseas Filipino workers, mixed marriages, environment, language, food, festivals, religion, endangered ethnic groups and cultural preservation. The video materials had been transcribed and class exercises and activities were developed targeting all

four language skills with emphasis on reading and writing. Completed pedagogical materials are then uploaded to the corresponding course supplementary web pages for easy access. These materials are chosen with great care so that, as much as possible, only those with potentially long-shelf life are included, making the collection a repository of materials on various topics and themes that may be reused over and over again. This development of pedagogical materials for the different levels and making them available through the internet will remain an on-going process. Completed and on-going projects have been made possible through the funding given by SEAP (NRC and research account), and with assistance from the Department of Asian Studies and the LRC.

Tagalog, just like the other five Southeast Asian languages being offered at Cornell and other numerous languages, is categorized as a Less Commonly Taught Language (LCTL), i.e. they are offered only in a handful of US universities and colleges. Another common denominator shared by most of these LCTLs is a concern about low enrollment, which unfortunately for some of them has a direct bearing on the viability of the program. In the case of Tagalog or Filipino, as it is now more commonly referred to in other universities, the degree of its categorization as a LCTL varies depending on geography. According to the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), there are 46 tertiary institutions in the US that offer Tagalog instruction and 32 of them are in the Pacific and the West Coast—21 of these are in California alone. These do not include the increasing number of middle and high schools in the state offering Tagalog instruction, as well. The remaining 14 institutions are in the Midwest (6), the East Coast (6) and Guam (2). The heavily skewed geographical distribution of these institutions indicates parallel figures in terms

of Tagalog language enrollment in each of these regions, i.e. more institutions in the Pacific and the West Coast are offering the language due to much higher demand for it and therefore, have consistently high enrollment level—a direct correlation to the fact that there is a much higher concentration of Filipino-American population in these areas. Rosalina Idos, one of the pioneering advocates for Filipino instruction in California since the 70s, reported during the First Filipino as a Global Language Conference (University of Hawaii, March 2008) that in San Diego alone, after 20 years of advocacy work, they now have 70 sections of Filipino courses in middle/high schools and community colleges. They continue to face the challenge of finding more instructors to train to bring their qualifications in second language instruction up to speed in order to accommodate the still increasing demand among potential heritage students.

Now let us take a closer look at Tagalog enrollment at Cornell. Since 2002, annual enrollment in the three levels ranged from 21 to 38. Heritage learners made up 77-93% of the total and 85-97% were undergrads. When asked “Why take Tagalog?”, their responses indicate a common need to reconnect with their roots and they think that one way to fill this need is to learn Tagalog. It is also interesting to note that at least one student every year decides to take this beyond just heritage learning, e.g. by pursuing a minor or a major in their bachelor’s degree, or a graduate degree thereafter, with a focus on the Philippines or Southeast Asia in general.

Equipped with all this information on the trends of Tagalog enrollment in and outside Cornell, I decided to explore the possibility of utilizing distance learning (DL) as a viable option for teaching Tagalog and as a way to address the issue of low enrollment. Technical, administrative and pedagogical dimensions of DL as an alternative approach to language



Intermediate Tagalog class, Fall semester 2004



instruction were closely examined by focusing on two language programs –Turkish and Bengali—which started to adopt this teaching method here at Cornell in cooperation with Syracuse University. Findings from these two pilot programs that may be useful to make the case for the application of DL to Tagalog instruction were, then, determined.

The rationale behind DL is quite simple—accessibility, i.e. providing highly motivated and focused students access to learning that ordinarily would not be available to them, e.g. in the San Diego case earlier, the students who could not be accommodated due to lack of additional well-trained teachers. Or they could be potential heritage and non-heritage learners in institutions where Tagalog is not offered at all.

After careful consideration of the information collected in various interviews conducted and actual observation of a couple of DL classes at LRC, presented below are some of the most pertinent findings from the study.


According to Richard Feldman, the director of LRC, among the various types of DL, IP video connection provides the most cost-efficient and best option for language teaching since it allows all the modes of social interaction needed in such a class set up. Needless to say, technical difficulties would be avoided if both the host and receiving sites have compatible equipment.

There is a crucial need to set up/develop some standardized online system that can be used not only to make class materials accessible to students at the receiving site but also allow easy smooth back and forth movement of these class documents. For example, this system should allow students to both answer the homework and submit it to the instructor online. Likewise, the online system should allow the instructor to check the submitted homework and then send it back to the

student with the grade and feedback. Fortunately, there are various available softwares now that may be used for this purpose, e.g. Web Audio Lab (WAL) and Media Notebook, which are both available at LRC.

The DL arrangement for Bengali was part of the NRC grant system that the South Asia Programs of Cornell and Syracuse University have. The Fulbright Exchange Program provides the same special arrangement for Turkish. This is likewise true for other universities operating within the same system like UCLA and UC Irvine that currently have a Tagalog DL arrangement for the beginning level. So, administration is not an issue for any of these programs. However, in the absence of such special arrangements, the administrative dimension could be the most challenging to deal with as evidenced by the following potential problems:

- Financial issues like a.) dealing with tuition (e.g. Should students from the receiving site who are already paying full tuition be required to pay additional tuition to the host site?); b) payment of the delivery of the DL course (e.g. for the use of facilities and salary of instructor)
- How to come up with a compromise when the 2 sites happen to have 2 conflicting systems (e.g. class schedule; course credits)
- Securing a firm commitment from both the host and receiving sites in making the DL endeavor not only viable but a sustainable arrangement as well.

In conclusion, yes, there are difficult administrative challenges involved in adopting DL as an alternative to teaching Tagalog at Cornell but they are not insurmountable. Perhaps just like the 20-year advocacy work of the Filipino teachers in San Diego, this is a goal that can only be realized with time, and of course, a little bit of persistence and perseverance. 



Tagalog students, Fall semester 2005, attending the Southeast Asian Languages' Luncheon



introduction

Following a protracted struggle for independence from Indonesia (1975-1999), the small, half-island territory of East Timor emerged as the first new nation of the 21st century. The process of disengagement, however, was messy, marred by militia violence, widespread destruction of infrastructure and the mass deportation of East Timorese into temporary refugee camps in Indonesian West Timor. East Timor itself was left a smoking ruin under the protection of a multi-national peacekeeping force (Interfet).

In the aftermath of the occupation and the formal achievement of independence in 2002 the nation has been busy with the task of rebuilding the institutions of governance and restoring social services. However, the path to a prosperous democratic future has been full of challenges and setbacks for both government and civil society. My own interest in this process takes the form of an extended ethnographic project to explore some of the contours of this post-conflict process of nation-building. In this paper I focus specifically on questions of land tenure and the stumbling efforts of government to institute formal regulatory arrangements for the administration of land across the country.¹

CUSTOMARY LAND & LEGAL



Fataluku traditional house



Andrew McWilliam,
Australian National
University

Contemporary East Timor

By way of introduction I begin by highlighting a series of issues that have had a significant influence on post-conflict, post colonial East Timor. Three of these are positive factors and offer reasons for optimism about the future of the country. Other issues reflect negative trends that present significant challenges to the rebuilding process.²

From an economic perspective, East Timor is a poor country, probably the poorest in Asia and most people pursue near subsistence agriculture, cropping seasonal maize and secondary food crops with smallholder livestock production. Agriculture is often precarious due to the vagaries of the monsoon rains and most

farmer families face seasonal food shortages during the year. For the last few years, however, East Timor has benefited from access to substantial oil and gas revenues flowing from the exploitation of reserves in the Timor Sea off the southern coast. As part of a joint agreement with neighboring Australia, these revenues currently amount to some US \$4 billion and growing in special purpose trust funds. The national government has so far resisted the temptation to draw these funds down for recurrent spending. They have also declined to take on any soft loans from multi-lateral organizations such as the IMF or the World Bank. So these trust funds represent an increasingly significant financial resource



Pre-election gathering of Saburai community(Bobonaro) 2007

REGULATION IN EAST TIMOR

and safety net for the future, a fund that can provide much needed long term investment in infrastructure, education and social services if managed effectively.

My second positive factor lies in the realm of politics. Since the end of occupation East Timor has ratified a constitution and established a parliamentary democracy; and one of the important principles of parliamentary democracy is the desirability of regular and fair elections with the real possibility that the incumbent government could lose office. Remarkably in June of 2007 that is exactly what happened when some 400,000 eligible citizens cast their votes in the national parliamentary elections. The Fretilin government, which had been the core organization of the resistance struggle against Indonesian and earlier Portuguese colonialism, lost power and moved to the opposition benches. The elected government is a coalition of democrat, socialist and non-aligned parties led by new Prime Minister, Xanana Gusmao (the former resistance leader

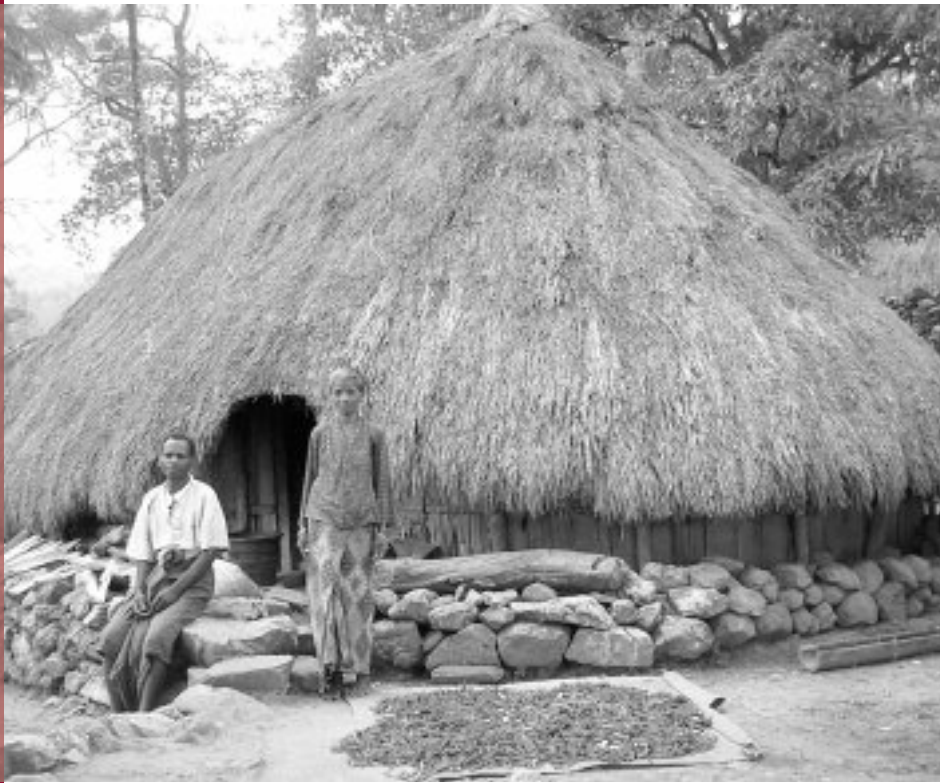
and inaugural president of the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste). The new government has now passed its first year in office, and while political stability remains somewhat elusive, I take it as a positive sign that the people of East Timor were permitted to entertain political diversity in government and actively embraced that opportunity.³

A third positive development is the equally remarkable population boom that has occurred in East Timor since the withdrawal of the Indonesian government. With a fertility rate around 7.8 babies for every fertile Timorese woman, settlements across the tropical landscape are bursting with babies and young children as the population rapidly approaches 1 million. It is also true that infant and maternal mortality rates remain stubbornly high but the evident widespread desire to have children is a sign of optimism and hope for the future; a peace dividend, as it were, after years of repression and uncertainty.

Negative issues are also widely influ-

ential and ramify across East Timor in different ways. Here I would mention the lingering legacy of 1999 following the popular ballot that decided East Timor's future where an overwhelming majority (80%) of the population voted to reject continued integration within Indonesia. In response the Indonesian military and the local militias it had resourced and armed, orchestrated a campaign of violence, looting, burning and destruction. In the process most government buildings were destroyed, and much of the Indonesian civil service fled the country. All social services and most commercial trading networks also collapsed (Fox and Babo Soares 2000). The resulting lack of a skilled and experienced workforce has made the task of rebuilding government and reinstating services a very substantial one, and one that East Timor is struggling to implement.

A further legacy of Timor's troubled history has been creation of deep seated and persistent divisions between



people who were so-called, “pro-autonomy” with Indonesia and those who sought full independence. These divisions have their roots in earlier resistance struggles against the Portuguese in the 1970’s but they have been exacerbated over the years and continue to be the source of much suffering and grief that has split families and communities, causing lingering resentments and occasional reprisals. The dramatic outbreak of inter-communal violence in the capital city, Dili during 2006, which saw a renewed round of destruction leaving thousands of residents displaced into temporary refugee camps, reflected some of these genealogies of conflict where “retaliation for past grievances find tactical opportunity for expression in situations of social unrest” (McWilliam and Bexley 2008:78).

Waiting for Law

My third constraining factor, and the principal subject for the remainder of this paper, is the remarkable fact that after nearly 9 years of effective independence there is still no operating regulatory

system for the administration of lands in the country. The resulting lack of security of land titles and land transactions as well as the absence of state validation of land entitlements has many negative impacts. It constrains economic investment and impedes land development decisions. It limits the possibility for effective resolution of land disputes and delays the implementation of efforts to conserve the country’s national resources. In short, the need to establish certainty over land titles, transactions and tenure systems is a fundamental component of a stable and prosperous society, but one that successive national governments in East Timor have failed to achieve.

The Government has made some progress towards regulation. The State Constitution of 2002 provides the principles of a land administration system regulated by law, and the ratification of the so-called First Property Law (2003) establishes the procedural arrangements for recognizing individual titles under varieties of leasehold and freehold regimes.⁴ Furthermore the government has endorsed and funded a land adminis-

tration unit⁵ to facilitate cadastral mapping and procedural implementation. That said however, the key enabling legislation remains in development, namely that which converts the constitutional land principles into regulatory practices including procedural rules for actually establishing land titles, mediating land disputes and laws covering the compulsory acquisition of lands for public purposes (see JSMP 2005:9).

The reasons for these delays are complex and political and one of the complicating factors is the existence of overlapping and conflicting land title systems that reflect the different periods of Portuguese (up to 1974) and Indonesian (1975-99) administrative land law. Different people have different titles to the same land and it is not clear which one will stand. There are also areas of Indonesian land law that are ambiguous or indeterminate and allowed the Indonesian government to allocate land to favoured clients while justifying the removal and relocation of local populations (Fitzpatrick 2002). This has given rise to a number of intractable land conflicts which have proved resistant to amicable resolution.⁶ So the decisions surrounding how these matters are dealt with are sensitive ones involving vested interests among political elites and the potential for political protests and conflict over contested claims.

Many of these issues relate to urban settings where higher land values and populations make resolution of these matters more urgent. Efforts to develop a land cadastre with digital portion boundaries are also being developed for urban areas, and it is likely that the government will initiate the titling process in concentrated settlement areas. My interests however, for the most part lie outside the towns and cities, in the uplands and rural hinterlands of East Timor where the majority of the population reside and where for generations, local systems of “informal” customary land tenures have prevailed. Historically, customary land arrangements have been

subsumed, marginalized or actively denied by state regulatory processes, but there is now a renewed attention to and revitalization of cultural practices surrounding land use which have been flourishing in the spaces created by legal inertia and uncertainty surrounding land regulation.

Customary Land Tenures: principles and patterns

Customary land arrangements tend to be poorly understood in East Timor, and while many local people may have a general sense of their own particular homeland areas, there is no comparative national perspective on these matters. Most of what we know derives from anthropological studies undertaken in a limited number of areas during the 1960s and 1970s (see McWilliam 2005). There is also a range of Portuguese historical data of mixed quality. During the period of Indonesian rule almost no detailed studies of customary land tenures or social research on cultural communities was undertaken. It follows that in the context of continuing debates around the development of land administration, a better understanding of the advantages and potentials for customary arrangements is warranted.

One of the striking features of East Timor is the high degree of indigenous

language diversity across the island with upwards of 26 distinct resident language communities. Language diversity may be taken as a proxy for different land tenure systems. Each language area has its own system of customary land tenures and in this sense all are somewhat different with their own histories, protocols and land relationships. At the same time because of generations of interaction and a substantially shared linguistic and Austronesian cultural heritage they also reveal a variety of principles and practices in common (see Fox and Sather 1996). Here I would outline some key features.

Firstly, where formal systems of land tenure tend to be documented in writing with full record histories, customary tenures typically rely on memory and narrative histories that recall land use practices and ownership claims. This makes them more diffuse, dynamic and sometimes contested.

Secondly, unlike formal land titling systems where there is a clear relationship between a defined portion of land and the legal person entitled to own or lease that land, all customary attachments to land are embedded within complex social relationships of exchange. Customary claims to resources are therefore assertions and statements about particular kinds of emplaced social relationships. The way you relate to

others informs your relations in land and this makes customary tenures difficult to codify. As James Scott has put it, customary land tenures have a “buzzing complexity and plasticity” that is rarely satisfactorily represented in the “straight-jacket of modern freehold property law” (1998:300).

Timor society operates on a clan system or what I call, “houses of ancestral origin” (in the local lingua franca, Tetun, *Uma lisan*: traditional house). This means that all members of the ancestral house trace their affiliation to their maternal or paternal ancestors. It is always one or the other in Timor and the island has an interesting mix of contrasting agnatic traditions. Households that comprise these “ancestral origin groups” are typically geographically dispersed across different communities within a local area, but convene from time to time to celebrate their shared history and identity in various life cycle rituals including marriages, funerals, harvest ceremonies and so on. The focus of these ceremonies is usually at important sites of significance in the clan’s history; the mythic first settlement of the ancestors, or at the clan cult house (in Tetun called *uma lulik*) which serves as a focus for ritual sacrifices and as a repository of clan heirlooms and cultural knowledge.

A further feature of these clan or “house” groups is that they represent land owning entities, managing and defending the ancestral property of the group as a product of generations of residence and the active management of clan resources. Membership to the ancestral “house” provides an automatic claim on access and use of these collective clan lands which are ultimately held under the authority of the clan leadership (In Tetun: *lian nain*, *rai nain*) who are sources of knowledge of clan land histories and serve as moral arbitrators in matters of dispute. Here I should also note that there are two general types of clan land, one held and worked communally, another type that has been devolved to constituent lineages (or



Houses in Lagaland (Baucau)



Woman weaving with back-strap loom

sibling groups) of the clan which are nevertheless nested within broader clan ownership. Communal clan land is rarely sold. Local clusters of these clan groups form the resident political community and their relative status is usually based on mythic narratives of settlement, with the oldest settler clans taking precedence and laying claim to larger areas of land.

A final feature I would highlight is the fact that these *uma lisan* – houses of origin – are exogamous. Members must marry into other *uma lisan* groups in order to prosper and reproduce the membership of the house. This understanding creates complex networks of affinal exchange and alliance between house groups and among other benefits provides another important way to gain access to land for agricultural livelihoods. In marriage men gain access to their wife's group's land resources while still retaining entitlements to the lands of their own *uma lisan*. While there may be much variation in particular cases, historically in Timor, the process of settling lands has always been one where immigrant men marry the daughters of resident clans and through the ensuing

alliance, obtain rights in land in return for their labor and political support as co-residents.

Comparative Perspectives in Post-Colonial Contexts.

In the context of debates around land administration and the regulation of land transactions, the question arises as to how the national government of East Timor is going to deal with the question of customary land tenures. Will they authorize and recognize them, survey and title the lands (most of which have never been surveyed or titled), or will they deny their validity and override or attempt to “modernize” them through administrative simplifications. These questions are unresolved and likely to remain so for the time being, even if indications are that a full scale privatized titling and leasehold system is the favored government strategy (ARD-USAID Ita Nia Rai [Our land] Project pers.comm).

One factor that constrains any national attempt to implement comprehensive land surveys and titling across the country is the limited institutional

capacity of the government itself, let alone the logistics and political complexities of surveying irregular cultural landscapes of local land ownership regimes. Indeed, there is likely to be a lengthy period where the status of land held under customary protocols will remain unsurveyed, for the most part untitled and subject to regimes that look more towards local traditions than state procedures for direction and legitimation. Under this scenario it seems to me that rather than neglect or ignore local systems of land ownership, there is a requirement to actively address the policy question of customary tenures and the future administrative arrangements that might prevail however transitional that process might be.

In this respect it is worth considering creative alternatives for recognising customary land practices that may be cost-effective and consistent with broader national development goals. Here I would point to developments in new institutional economics that have provided more sympathetic readings of the merits of customary tenures against the prevailing orthodoxy of development economics; namely that privatization of land tenures is the only sensible approach for promoting investment and economic development. This change in perspective extends to neo-liberal institutions such as the World Bank whose 2003 land policy report, based on an extended study of comparative systems around the world, presented the case for customary tenures. The authors argue that in terms of economic development, it is tenure security that generates investment, not necessarily individualized or formalized property rights, and that “tenure security can be provided more effectively in certain circumstances and at a lower cost by customary rather than centralized state institutions” (World Bank 2003:23, 44). The question, in these circumstances becomes not one of defining the formal “rights” of customary tenures *per se*, but of identifying and authorizing the local institutions and mechanisms than can


achieve orderly and effective management practices. The approach might be seen as a productive engagement between what my colleague, Greg Acciaioli has termed, “representative institutions of modernity and customary institutions of indigeneity” (2005:39).

Flexible and adaptive approaches that build upon existing and well tested land management arrangements may well offer a feasible alternative to the logistical challenges of broad acre land delineation and alienation. One example of such an approach would recognize that across much of East Timor customary land practices are working effectively



Xanana Gusmao with Tutuala dancers

with the support of local populations. In these cases, one regulatory strategy may be to recognize customary land practices as the default system and to authorize existing processes as de-facto land administration. If land disputes arise that cannot be resolved at the local level, and the great majority are dealt with at this level (Asia Foundation 2004), the government could establish a regional land tribunal or similar to adjudicate settlements and social justice. In cases where land markets are developing, especially in peri-urban areas, elected local village authorities (Chefe de Suku) could administer transaction records. This kind of approach has the advantage of being both inexpensive and strengthening a working system. It does not do away with the need for a formal judiciary nor a state-based land titling system but rather points to one of the key challenges of nation-building in East Timor, namely the integration of democratic governance with cultural traditions; a version of what Charles Zerner has called for elsewhere, as more effective translations of the performative modalities of custom into the jural modalities of legal rights (2003).

Customary land tenure systems in East Timor have remained highly resilient in the face of successive waves of Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation. The challenge for contemporary East Timorese society is to build upon this remarkable cultural heritage in order to fashion effective and inclusive forms of participatory governance. 



Sacrificing to the ancestors

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- ¹ The study draws on research undertaken as part of an Australian Research Council funded project (2005-2008) to explore customary land tenures in East Timor and to contribute to policy debates. The research is a collaborative project with Daniel Fitzpatrick, Susana Barnes and staff of the National Directorate for Land and Property in East Timor.
- ² For additional reflections on the post-Independence experience in East Timor, see Kingsbury and Leach (2006).
- ³ See McWilliam and Bexley 2008 for an analysis of the parliamentary election.
- ⁴ A number of supplementary pieces of legislation clarifying covering leasing arrangements for government buildings (2004) and between individuals have also been passed (Reg 12/2005) [JSMP 2005].
- ⁵ The National Directorate of Land and Property (*Direção Nacional de Terras e Propriedades*).
- ⁶ Large scale relocation and displacement of populations occurred under Indonesian rule which tended to over-ride the conventional protocols governing land access among local communities, and resulted in long term conflicts over use rights and entitlements.

Student News

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

MASTER'S THESES

ON SOUTHEAST ASIA

AUGUST 20, 2007

Tatebayashi, Asuka

[Asian studies]

Gender Impact of
Koto Panjang Dam –
The Case
of Matrilineal
Minangkabau Society

Charoenkajonchai, Sukhum

[economics]

“Special – no thesis required”

JANUARY 16, 2008

Djalins, Upik Wira Marlin (MS)

[development sociology]

“Colonial Knowledge
and the Native Scholar:
Supomo, Adat Land
Rights and Agrarian
Reorganization in
Surakarta
1900-1920s”

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

ON SOUTHEAST ASIA

AUGUST 20, 2007

Butler, Marcia [history]

Reflections of a Military Medium: Ritual and Magic in Eleventh and Twelfth
Century Chinese Military Manuals

Garcia, Michael Nieto [English literature & language]

Narratives of the Ethnic Self: Richard Wright's *Black Boy* and Richard Rodriguez's
Hunger for Memory, Days of Obligation and *Brown*

Haberkorn, Tyrell Caroline [anthropology]

States of Transgression: Politics, Violence, and Agrarian Transformation in
Northern Thailand

Hien, Nina Mai [anthropology]

Reanimating Vietnam: Icons, Photography & Image Making in Ho Chi Minh City

Hui, Yew-foong [anthropology]

Strangers at Home: History and Subjectivity Among the Chinese Communities
of West Kalimantan, Indonesia

Lim, Tai-wei [history]

Oil in China: The Quest for Self Reliance

Ruth, Richard Alfred [history]

Committed to the Fire: Thailand's Volunteer Soldiers in the Vietnam War,
1967-1972

JANUARY 16, 2008

Lee, Doreen [anthropology]

The Origins of our Future: Nationalism and Youth in the Indonesian Student
Movement

Richl, Anastasia Kay [linguistics]

The Phonology and Phonetics of Nasal-Obstruent Sequences



Rose Metro and Trais Pearson are the 2008-2009 SEAP Student Committee co-chairs.

DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIPS

FULBRIGHT-HAYS DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABROAD FELLOWSHIPS

Amanda Flaim, Ph.D. candidate in development sociology, Education and Social Change in the Highlands of Northern Thailand

Samson Lim, Ph.D. candidate in history, Narratives of Violence, Technologies of Proof: Law and Society in Thailand from 1944-Present

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Lawrence Chua, Ph.D. candidate in architecture, A History of Leisure Architecture in Thailand, 1911-1976: public space, national identity, and modernity

MILTON L. BARNETT SCHOLARSHIP

Oiyan Liu, Ph.D. candidate in history, Chinese diasporic networks in Maritime Southeast Asia

GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN FALL 2008

The 11th Annual Southeast Asian Studies Graduate Conference will be held at the Kahin Center for Advanced Research on Southeast Asia on October 24-26, 2008.

The keynote speaker will be Professor Benedict Anderson (Aaron L. Bienkorb Professor Emeritus of International Studies, Government and Asian Studies, Cornell University), the author of *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* ([1983], rev. ed. 1991), *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (1998), and *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (2007).

For more information feel free to contact Rose Metro or Trais Pearson at seapgradconference@gmail.com

FALL 2008

Brown Bag LECTURES

SEPTEMBER

- 11 Gadis Arivia, philosophy and women's studies, University of Indonesia
- 18 Maria Monica Wihardja, city and regional planning, Cornell University
- 25 Jessica Chapman, history, Williams College

OCTOBER

- 2 Jean Michaud, anthropology, Université Laval (Quebec)
- 9 Andre Vltchek, journalist and filmmaker based in Indonesia
- 24-26 11th Annual SEAP Graduate Student Conference (Kahin Center)
- 30 Juliane Schober, religious studies, Arizona State University

NOVEMBER

- 6 Thomas Pepinsky, government, Cornell University
- 13 David Elliot, politics, Pomona College
- 20 Ma Thida, Burmese fiction author and International Writers Project Fellow, Brown University

For the full listing of Brown Bag lecture titles and the spring 2009 schedule see the forthcoming winter e-bulletin at

<http://einaudi.cornell.edu/south-eastasia/outreach/bulletins.asp>

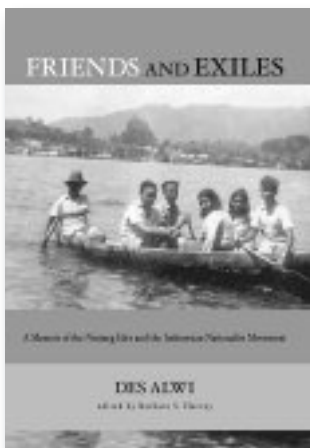
New

FROM SEAP PUBLICATIONS



Conflict, Violence, and Displacement in Indonesia, ed. Eva-Lotta E. Hedman

This volume foregrounds the dynamics of displacement and the experiences of internal refugees uprooted by conflict and violence in Indonesia. Contributors examine internal displacement in the context of militarized conflict and violence in East Timor, Aceh, and Papua, and in other parts of Outer Island Indonesia during the transition from authoritarian rule. The volume also explores official and humanitarian discourses on displacement and their significance for the politics of representation. SOSEA 45. ISBN 978-0-87727-745-3



Friends and Exiles: A Memoir of the Nutmeg Isles and the Indonesian Nationalist Movement, by Des Alwi, edited by Barbara S. Harvey

Des Alwi tells of his childhood on the eastern Indonesian island of Banda, where he was befriended and adopted by the two nationalist leaders, Mohammad Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir, exiled there by the Dutch colonial regime. He describes his experiences on Banda and Java during the Japanese Occupation and his involvement in the underground struggle for Independence. SOSEA 44. ISBN 978-0-87727-744-6

DES ALWI'S MEMOIR, *Friends and Exiles*, tells of his childhood on the eastern Indonesian

island of Banda and his experiences as a young man during the Japanese Occupation. A self-described "rascal," Des brings a light touch to his personal narrative, while at the same time providing insight into the texture of life under Dutch colonial rule and during the Occupation. His descriptions of his Dutch schoolmasters, his diverse friends, and the variety of Japanese officials and soldiers with whom he came into contact add a human dimension to what we know of this era from standard political histories.

Of particular interest are Des Alwi's accounts of his association with the nationalist leaders Sutan Sjahrir and Mohammad Hatta, who were exiled to Banda by the Dutch in 1936, where they

remained until 1941. As portrayed by the author, Hatta is "serious, responsible, and respected," Sjahrir "playful, principled, and complex."

While living in Sjahrir's household in Jakarta, and with Sjahrir's associates in East Java, during the Japanese Occupation, Des Alwi observed directly the network of nationalists who declined to cooperate with the Japanese, a network sometimes described as an "underground." With overt resistance virtually impossible, the Sjahrir circle exchanged news of the progress of the war, obtained by listening secretly to Allied broadcasts. Access to this information was important as the Japanese surrender neared, and the nationalists were able to use the cadre they had enlisted and trained, and the networks they had established, to spread news of the Japanese surrender and the subsequent Indonesian declaration of independence on August 17, 1945.

This memoir relates history as it was experienced by a young man and remem-

bered years later. The details Des Alwi recounts enrich our appreciation of Indonesian history by bringing vividly to life significant events and people who helped shape the country and guide it toward independence.

—Barbara S. Harvey



Does and Des Alwi in front of the house where Hatta and Sjahrir lived, 1937

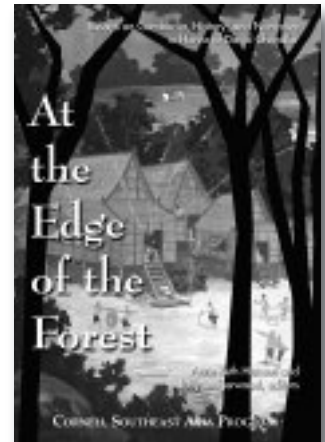
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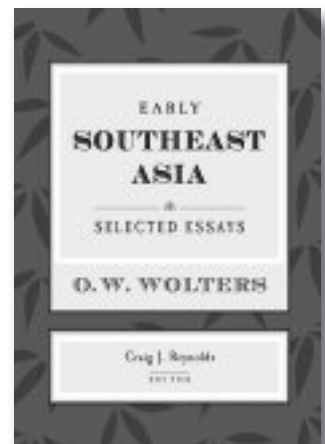
At the Edge of the Forest: Essays on Cambodia, History, and Narrative in Honor of David Chandler, ed. Anne Ruth Hansen and Judy Ledgerwood

Inspired by the groundbreaking work of David Chandler on Cambodian attempts to find order in the aftermath of turmoil, these essays explore Cambodian history using a rich variety of sources that cast light on Khmer perceptions of violence, wildness, and order, the “forest” and cultured space, and the fraught “edge” where they meet. Taken together, the essays offer a post-colonial analysis of Cambodia’s emergence from genocide that explores the relationship between narrative, history, and perplexing problems of meaning. SOSEA 46. ISBN 978-0-87727-746-0



Early Southeast Asia: Selected Essays, by O. W. Wolters, edited
by Craig J. Reynolds

A collection of the classic essays of O. W. Wolters, reflecting this scholar’s radiant and meticulous lifelong study of pre-modern Southeast Asia, its literature, trade, government, and vanished cities. Included is an intellectual biography by the editor, which covers Wolters’s professional lives as a member of the Malayan Civil Service and, later, as a scholar. SOSEA 43. ISBN 978-0-87727-743-9



OLIVER W. WOLTERS joined
Cornell’s Southeast Asia Program in
1964 and until his retirement in 1985



Euteen Wolters and O. W. Wolters in 1995

trained historians of the region who work in universities around the world. Scholars from Southeast Asia who took his courses were influenced by his teaching. His historical writing contributed many of the building blocks in Southeast Asian studies we take for granted today.

From 1938 until 1957, Wolters was an official in the Malayan Civil Service. After internment in Changi Prison during the Japanese Occupation, he worked in the Chinese section. He pioneered planning of the Taiping Rehabilitation Camp, and he served as District Officer in Perak. In his last years in Malaya he was head of the Psychological Warfare Section.

This volume of essays displays the range of his work in early Indonesian, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Thai history. It includes a piece on sixteenth-century Ayutthaya where Wolters first

discussed his concept of the *man-dala*, a paradigm of the pre-modern kingdom. In the introduction, “The Professional Lives of O. W. Wolters,” I speak about the intellectual background of Wolters’s scholarship and traces connections between his first career in the British colonial administration and his later academic career.

Why read Wolters today? Wolters was a historian’s historian, restlessly looking for new sources and new ways of reading them. An observer as well as an exerciser of power during his time in Malaya, he devoted his academic life to the study of power, religion, commerce, and the dynamics of interstate relations in early Southeast Asia.

—Craig J. Reynolds

Outreach news

Kahin Prize Celebrated in Atlanta

In April 2008, the Association of Asian Studies formally announced the establishment of the George McT. Kahin Prize. The prize was established at the behest of SEAP, friends, family, and students of George Kahin, and the Southeast Asia Council to honor Kahin's contributions to the field of Southeast Asian Studies. Kahin was a founding member of SEAP and the program's director from 1960-1969. The Kahin Prize is one of two



book prizes awarded for scholarship in the field of Southeast Asian Studies, along with the Harry J. Benda Prize for the best "first book" each year in the field. The Kahin Prize aims to encourage and recognize continuing contribution to the field in the form of second books and beyond.

Audrey Kahin, SEAP director Thak Chaloemtiarana, and many SEAP faculty, students and alumni were on hand in Atlanta to celebrate the new prize in honor of George.

Enrichment and Exploration

SEAP Outreach has had an exceptionally busy summer. After two collaborative teacher training workshops in the spring focused on Global Climate Change, we have been working hard to prepare for a workshop on Global Media Perspectives on August 11. This workshop will be the testing ground for new global media literacy curriculum developed in conjunction with Project Look Sharp (<http://www.ithaca.edu/looksharp/>). The SEAP contribution to this workshop focuses on Islamic Majorities and Minorities in Southeast Asia and will be available online in the near future.

SEAP also helped organize a three-day program focused on language learning and international careers for 4-H Career Explorations participants. After eating an Asian breakfast, participating in a Japanese tea ceremony, and touring the high-tech Language Resource Center, members of this motivated group of high school students had the chance to spend an afternoon studying Indonesian with SEAP's Jolanda Pandin (while others studied Chinese, Hausa, and Bengali). Students also learned to sing and dance Thai ramwong under the guidance of Wichitra Khammee (Kung) and Thamora Fishel.

Indonesian shadow puppetry and gamelan have offered inspiration to students from Elmira and Groton who are participating in Cornell's newly established Upward Bound Program. For six weeks students learned



about, made, and put on a performance using shadow puppets. They also spent one session learning about gamelan hands-on from Marty Hatch. A similar but scaled-down shadow puppet project was held for fifth and sixth graders at the Enfield Elementary School summer enrichment camp.

SEAP FACULTY ASSOCIATES IN RESEARCH (FAR)

welcomes...

Jennifer Gaynor is Assistant Professor of History at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, and is at Cornell for the academic year at



the Society for the Humanities. Her research examines the history and ethnography of maritime worlds, particularly those in Southeast Asia, a fitting topic for the Society's theme year on "Water, a Critical Concept for the Humanities." She has published work on historical notions of maritime space in Southeast Asia, as well as on the new spatial division of labor in Eastern Indonesia's "rural littoral." Her current research examines how Europeans have viewed Southeast Asian sea people and is part of a wider book project on their historical representation.

Trained in Anthropology and History at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Dr. Gaynor has spent four years living in Indonesia where she carried out extensive ethnographic fieldwork on the coasts and offshore islands of Sulawesi. She has also conducted archival research in Indonesia, Britain and the Netherlands. As with her research, her teaching draws on this interdisciplinary background. She has taught courses on global maritime history, on culture, memory and the uses of the past, folk heroes and historical martyrs, colonial Southeast Asia through the novel, U.S. interventions in Southeast Asia (the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam), and Indonesia's "long" 1950's. She spent two years as Visiting Assistant Professor of History while a Mellon-funded Fellow at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and has also been a Luce Fellow at the Australian National University's Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies. It is, she says, a delight to be at the Society for the Humanities and to have an ongoing affiliation as a Faculty Associate in Research with the Southeast Asia Program.

Tyrell Haberkorn completed her Ph.D. in Sociocultural Anthropology at Cornell University in 2007 and is a Postdoctoral Fellow in Peace and Conflict Studies at Colgate University.

She is currently revising her dissertation into a book manuscript entitled *States of Transgression: politics, violence, and the law in northern Thailand*. She writes "*States of Transgression* is about how farmers and students in Chiang Mai and Lamphun worked together to challenge landholding elites and the Thai state in the mid-1970s. By the very act of their alliance, as well as the organizing they undertook together, I argue that the farmers and students challenged both the significant material interests of the landholding elite, and the ruling order itself. The magnitude of this challenge was indicated in the violent reactions with which state, para-state, landholding, and right-wing actors greeted it. I theorize how harassment, intimidation, assassination, and arbitrary arrest are indications of social and political transformation by examining the explicit links between the challenges to state, para-state, and landholding elites posed by farmer-student alliances and the violence with which they were met."



Her academic interests include violence, agrarian struggle, radical politics, gender studies, nationalism and silence, human rights, and sovereignty in Southeast Asia. She serves as the Thailand and Laos country specialist for Amnesty International USA, and is working to develop and implement their campaigns related to Southeast Asia.

Doreen Lee is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Amherst College, where she teaches courses on Southeast Asian studies, technology and cities. She finished her Ph.D. in Anthropology at Cornell in 2008, and has been an active member of the SEAP community since 2000. In addition to being a member of FAR, Doreen was appointed as a Visiting Fellow at SEAP and spent the summer doing research in the Echols Collection and writing in an office at the Kahin Center.



Her work in Indonesia engages the study of youth and nationalism, as well as visual culture and urban studies. At present she is working on a manuscript on youth and political culture in post-Reformasi Indonesia.

Meredith Weiss recently joined the faculty in Political Science at the University at Albany, State University of New York. She completed her doctorate at Yale in 2001 and has held positions at DePaul University, Georgetown University, and the East-West Center Washington. Her book *Protest and Possibilities: Civil Society and Coalitions for Political Change in Malaysia* was published by Stanford University Press in 2006.



Her second monograph, *Crucible, Mirror, Sideshow? Universities and Students in Post-colonial Malaysia* is currently under review. She is also the co-editor of several edited books on topics such as political violence, social movements, and social policymaking.

Meredith's research centers on Malaysia and Singapore (with some attention to Indonesia as well). She teaches courses on Southeast Asian Politics, Comparative Politics, Social Movements, and Contentious Politics in Southeast Asia. She is excited to be in such close proximity to Cornell and SEAP, both because of the library and the intellectual community.

Photos from these FAR member's field research will be featured in the Winter 2008 e-bulletin.

For a full directory of FAR members see the Fall 2007 SEAP bulletin or the Winter 2008 e-bulletin due out in December <http://einaudi.cornell.edu/southeastasia/outreach/bulletins.asp>

SEAP FACULTY 2008-2009

Benedict R. O. Anderson, Aaron L. Binenkorb Professor Emeritus of International Studies, government and Asian studies

Iwan Azis, professor, city and regional planning

Warren B. Bailey, professor, finance and Asian studies

Randolph Barker, professor emeritus, agricultural economics and Asian studies

Anne Blackburn, associate professor, south Asia and Buddhist studies

Thak Chaloemtiarana, professor, Asian studies (on leave 2008-2009)

Abigail Cohn, associate professor, linguistics and Asian studies

Magnus Fiskesjö, assistant professor, anthropology (on leave Fall 2008)

Greg Green, curator, Echols Collection on Southeast Asia

Martin F. Hatch, associate professor, music and Asian studies

Ngampit Jagacinski, senior language lecturer, Thai

Sarosh Kuruvilla, Director of the Cornell University Southeast Asia Program; professor, industrial and labor relations and Asian studies

Fred Logevall, professor, history

Tamara Lynn Loos, associate professor, history and Asian studies

Kaja M. McGowan, associate professor, art history, archaeology and Asian studies

Stanley J. O'Connor, professor emeritus, art history and Asian studies

Lorraine Paterson, assistant professor, Asian studies

Jolanda Pandin, language lecturer, Indonesian

Thomas Pepinsky, assistant professor, government

Hannah Phan, language lecturer, Khmer

Maria Theresa Savella, senior language lecturer, Tagalog

James T. Siegel, professor emeritus, anthropology and Asian studies

Eric Tagliacozzo, associate professor, history and Asian studies

Keith W. Taylor, professor, Vietnamese cultural studies and Asian studies (on leave 2008-2009)

Erik Thorbecke, H.E. Babcock Professor Emeritus of Food Economics and economics

Thuy Tranviet, senior language lecturer, Vietnamese

San San Hnin Tun, senior language lecturer, Burmese

Marina Welker, assistant professor, anthropology (on leave Fall 2008)

Andrew Willford, associate professor, anthropology and Asian studies

Lindy Williams, professor, development sociology

John U. Wolff, professor emeritus, linguistics and Asian studies

New SEAP Faculty

Welcome to **Thomas B. Pepinsky**, who joined the Government department as an Assistant Professor in July 2008. Tom holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Yale University (2007) and most recently he was an Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

His research lies at the intersection of comparative politics and international political economy. Focusing on Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam, he examines how research on Southeast Asia informs theoretical debates about authoritarian rule and financial policy in open economies. His recent work explores the conditions under which international economic crises prompt policy reforms and democratization, drawing lessons from the Asian Financial Crisis and placing them in the comparative context. Some of his other projects study the coalitional bases of authoritarian rule, financial politics in emerging market economies, and the effects of aerial bombing during the Vietnam War.

Currently, he is involved in several co-authored projects on the political economy of Islam, in Indonesia and around the world. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *World Politics*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *European Journal of International Relations*, *Journal of Democracy*, and an edited volume on the modern political economy of East Asia. The working title of his first book is *Economic Crises and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes* and is under contract at Cambridge University Press.

At Cornell Tom will be teaching courses on Southeast Asian politics, comparative and international political economy, and political Islam. His obituary of Suharto was featured in the last SEAP e-bulletin (http://einaudi.cornell.edu/southeastasia/outreach/bulletin_archive/e-bulletin%20spring08.pdf) and you can learn more about him and find the link to his website (which includes photos and a blog of his travels) at <http://falcon.arts.cornell.edu/govt/faculty/Pepinsky.html>. Be sure to catch his Brown Bag talk on November 6th!



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